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PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI—WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 1953

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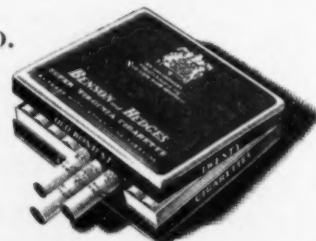


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John McCallum
gave his wife
Googie Withers
a Parker '51' for
her birthday



JOHN MCCALLUM and his wife GOOGIE WITHERS, both began life a long way from Britain. She was born in Karachi, the daughter of a British Officer in the Royal Indian Navy, and he is an Australian. For her birthday he gave her a Parker '51'. Googie Withers is starring in the theatre success 'The Deep Blue Sea,' and John McCallum's new film 'The Long Memory' will shortly be released by the J. Arthur Rank Organization.



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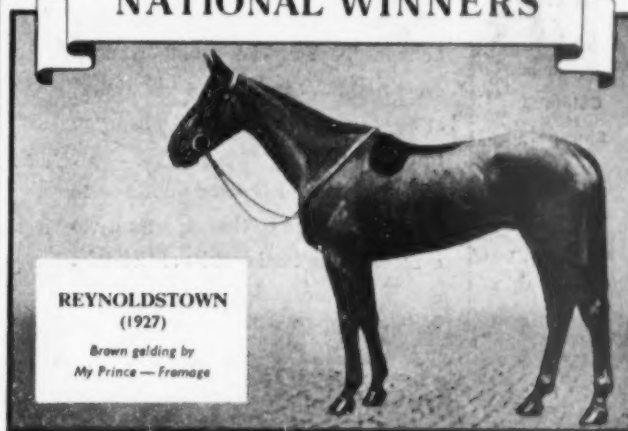
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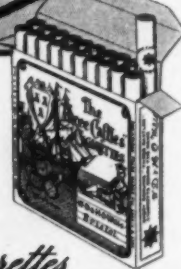
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[PNN 81]



HEAD OF A WARRIOR, a study in red chalk for the cartoon of "The Battle of Anghiari", by Leonardo da Vinci, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest. Tragically, when the design was transferred to the wall of the Hall of Council, in Florence, the colours ran and the result was a failure. All that now remains of the cartoon itself are a number of studies of fighting men and horses, which were drawn by Leonardo on paper in 1504.

If it had not been for the paper on which Leonardo made his preliminary studies, any record of his actual work on this, one of his most famous masterpieces, would have been lost to posterity. And it is paper that has enabled this superb study of a head to be seen by millions throughout the world. In the reproduction of great works of art the printer and the paper-maker have combined to bring the masterpieces of the world to those denied an opportunity of visiting the famous art galleries. The spread of culture depends on paper. On it the heritage of the past is constantly renewed, for on paper reprinting can retain knowledge and culture for ever.



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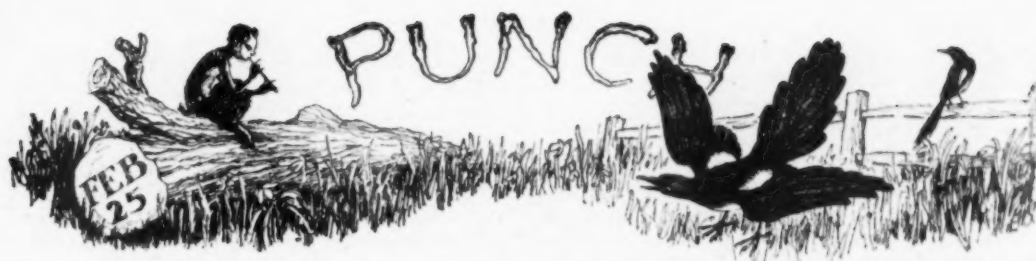
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CHARIVARIA

THE suggestion in a recent leading article that Egyptian developments could give birth to a Middle East Defence Organization, or MEDO, have been received uneasily by the amateur of world politics. After so lately getting the hang of SHAPE, NATO, EPU, ECA, OEEC, ECSC and the rest, he feels that he should not be confronted with the new mysteries of MECSC, OMEEC, MECA, MEPU, METO and SHAPME until he knows exactly what NEGUIB stands for.

~ ~

Opinion is divided on the desirability of elaborate security measures during President Tito's stay in this country next month. While some feel that it is a denial of traditional British freedoms if the head of a foreign State cannot take a stroll in the park without an attendant bodyguard from the Special Branch, others point out that ours is not the only government anxious to offer the President official hospitality.



Reports that British boxing promoter Mr. Jack Solomons all but came to blows with American boxing promoter Mr. Harry Markson in a dressing-room at New York's Madison Square Garden, over a difference of opinion about where, when and whom Mr. Randolph Turpin should next fight, are followed by rumours that Turpin won't be fighting at all, but promoting the next bout between Markson and Solomons.

~ ~

It is thought that Mr. Crosbie Hall, Scottish trade union delegate visiting Moscow by invitation, who according to a Russian broadcast said of his reception that the food seemed "more appropriate to a luncheon or banquet in the House of Lords than to a delegation coming to the Soviet Union" won't be asked again.

When Vienna was recently flooded with pre-election leaflets looking like 100-schilling banknotes, but with political promises printed on the back, police had to order their withdrawal because sharpers were passing them as legal tender. It was a shock to the victims to learn that the front wasn't worth anything either.

~ ~

One argument in support of Mr. Follick's scheme to teach children simplified spelling is that most of them have mastered it already.

~ ~

It was a sagacious move to send the record-breaking Canberra to Woomera, where the rockets come from. Don't want any swelled heads.

~ ~

Mr. Thomas Fassam, an Industrial Welfare Society lecturer, recently addressed a one-day conference of factory forewomen on The Art of Giving and Receiving Orders. The talk, according to the *Manchester Guardian* account, was illustrated by recorded recitals of *Julius Caesar* speeches, and though Mr. Fassam urged his students to "follow the pattern of the orator's English" it is to be hoped that he warned them to be sparing with verbatim extracts. Nowadays even a forewoman can't call people blocks and stones and worse than senseless things, and get away with it.



~ ~

After the signing of the recent agreement on the Sudan, newsreel cameras recorded a close embrace between the head of the Egyptian Government and the British Ambassador. This is thought to have been Sir Ralph Stevenson's first screen kiss.

EDEN IN EGGITTO

TRAVELLERS through the southern provinces of the Sudan will have a vivid memory of the local inhabitants there—tall, largely naked individuals, quite illiterate, and seemingly unaware of the existence of football pools, talking pictures, multiple stores, comic strips and other appurtenances of twentieth-century civilization. One at least of these amenities of which they have hitherto been deprived is shortly to be conferred on them. They are to have the vote, and to be subjected to the excitement of an electoral campaign. It will, it is true, be difficult to explain to them what the campaign is about, but by means of pictorial representations on the ballot boxes—a device much favoured in India—it will doubtless prove possible to induce them to indicate a choice. Thus, by registering a preference for, say, an umbrella, rather than an ox, they will be supporting such a candidate rather than such another, and thereby ensuring that in far-away Khartoum they will in due course be represented in a government and legislature now in process of formation.

It would require a very sanguine disposition indeed to suppose that such an arrangement will prove in the long, or even short, run beneficial to the Southern Sudanese, who have been delivered from the ravages of the slave trade by an exceptionally competent and considerate British colonial administration. The actual beneficiaries under the arrangement are likely to be rather those few Sudanese, somewhat euphemistically described as "politically conscious," who frequent cafés, read newspapers, carry fly-switches and like having their shoes shined. It provides a theme to which some future Gibbon surveying this strange time will doubtless do justice—how, in the name of self-determination and representative institutions, territory after territory was handed over to as corrupt and pettifogging oligarchies as have ever plagued mankind, and how, despite this constantly repeated experience, each new essay of the kind was greeted with the same idiot satisfaction and platitudinous good wishes.

In the case of the Sudan the particular justification offered is that, by agreeing with the present Egyptian Government regarding the Sudan's future status, the way is cleared for a further agreement on the withdrawal of British forces from the Suez Canal Zone. *Punch*, in its issue of December 11, 1875, published, along with the cartoon reproduced on this page, a commentary on the just completed purchase by Disraeli of a controlling interest in the Suez Canal. "England," it was concluded, "having got a hold of the Suez Canal, and paid for it, knows how to keep it and means to keep it, all people and potentates to the contrary notwithstanding." The Canal has indeed been defended on numerous occasions, to the great benefit of international shipping,

but it looks now as though the key which Disraeli so astutely acquired, and which Rommel was unable to lay hands on, will shortly be turned over to General Neguib, in the expectation that it will be safe in his keeping.

At the same time, it will not be difficult for "politically conscious" Egyptians to infiltrate their like among the Sudanese, and to ensure that they are brought within Cairo's orbit. "Tourists" of the type of Major Salem are already, we may be sure, engaged in this pursuit, and, to help them along, General Neguib has indicated, in a decidedly contemptuous manner, that "independence" for the Sudanese does not involve the right to join the British Common-



"MOSE IN EGGITTO!!!"

wealth. To those who remember the not very impressive performance of the Egyptians during the last war, and in their conflict with Israel, it must seem extraordinary that such substantial concessions should be made to procure an agreement with a people so notoriously untrustworthy and unstable. Some words Mr. Churchill wrote in 1932 are to the point:

"A generation has grown up which knows little of why we are in Egypt and the Sudan and what our work there has been. It is my hope that the story which these pages contain [*The River War*] may be some help and encouragement to those who have still confidence in the destiny of Britain in the Orient. They may learn from it how much harder it is to build up and acquire than to squander and cast away."

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE



"O, WHITHER HAST THOU LED ME, EGYPT?"

MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK

BORROWING a piano, which means borrowing a house with a piano in it, is no longer the casually innocent affair it once was. I realized this as I felt the policeman's rhythmical breath over my shoulder and heard the thudding counter-beat of his heels on the enviable carpet. Neither was right for my Ravel: it faltered to a dislocated stop for which premature was only in one sense the word. I was not doing justice even to myself.

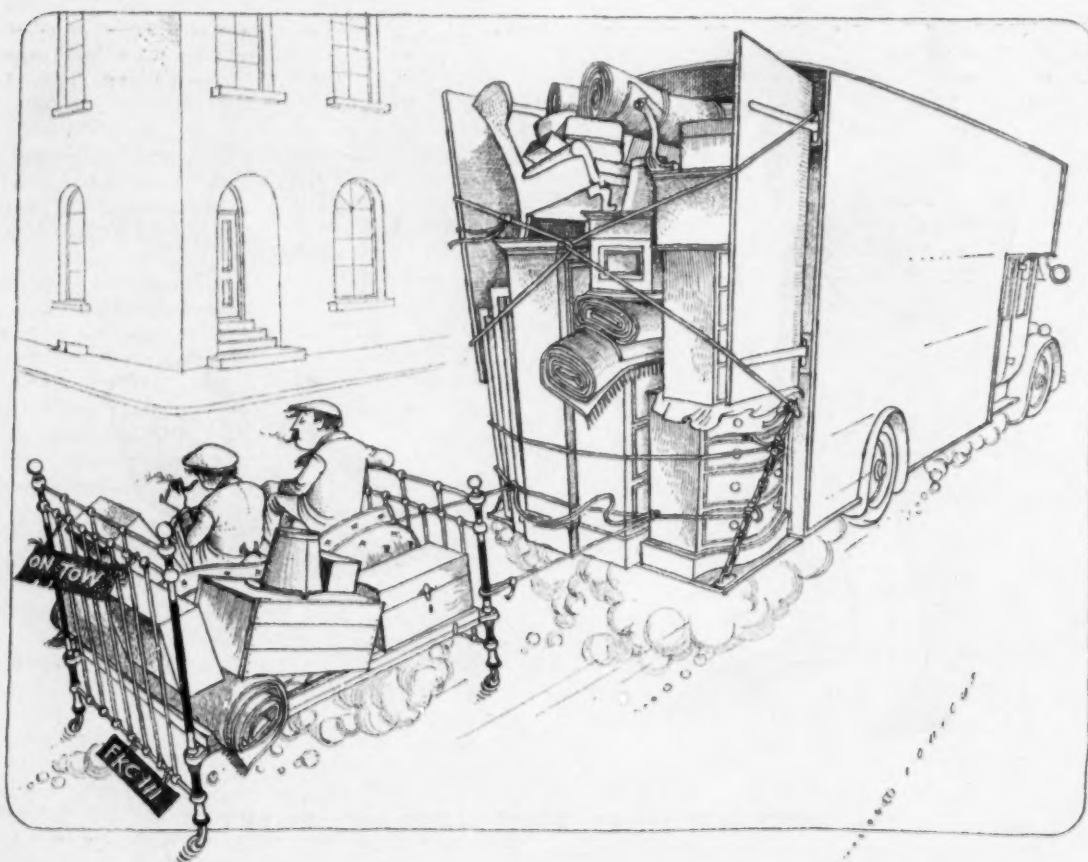
"It's F-sharp in the bass as well as up top," the policeman said. "And a bit more *rubato*, like." My back tried to register icy silence, but the policeman's patronizing smile, plumb between the shoulder-blades, was too much for it. Desperately I broke into a snatch of Grieg, which

came to pieces in my hands. I swung round a half-turn on my squealing stool and observed that he could hardly expect me to be a Paderewski as well as a burglar.

"You'd be surprised," the policeman said. "Sir," he added, making the word sound not so much a sneer as an insurance just in case his suspicions were wrong after all. What I would be surprised about, it turned out, was the technical ability (in both spheres of their profession) of some musical burglars he had known. He had reason to be sensitive about them; it appeared that on his last beat he had been deceived by a remarkably talented string quartet.

"They led me up the garden that night, all right." The policeman

scowled admiringly and strummed a brooding chord or two in the deep bass. "Played like angels, they did, right up till one in the morning. Schubert and Beethoven mostly, but it was Schoenberg's second quartet that got me, with one of them humming the voice part. When they were leaving I made a point of saying how much I'd enjoyed listening to them from the street. I even helped them find a taxi, and all the time their music cases were stuffed with jewellery and gold cups and medals. The chap who owned the house was a golf champ; that ought to have made me suspicious from the start, hearing Beethoven quartets coming from there. Particularly late quartets. Very late, you might say." He



produced a bitter smile. "I was a sucker all right, that night." The officer was without false pride, but clearly he was not going to be taken in twice.

What, I asked him—since it was less embarrassing to talk than to play—did they do with their instruments? He chuckled fiercely. They left them behind, of course. One of the abandoned fiddles was labelled "Antonius Stradiarius Cremonensis Faciebat Anno 1715," and when the golf champion got back he thought the joke was on the burglars; but the thing turned out, of course, to be a crude copy worth about fifty shillings. "They knew their stuff, all right," the policeman said. "Now I'd say you were a plain amachoor. All the same . . ."

His voice tailed off into a heavy question mark, and I was reminded that I had not been doing myself justice in any direction. There are entirely reasonable tangles of circumstance from which there is no escape, this side of strangulation. Either you are the sort of person who gets into them or you are not. I was, and I had. Nevertheless, for the sake of politeness, I went through my lame explanations all over again. It made the policeman feel at home.

So the gentleman who owned this house had said I could go in and play the piano any time, had he? Correct. And yet I didn't even know his name? Correct too; we enjoyed a sort of semi-cordial hob-nodding relationship, not wanting to get too involved with each other. But surely he had lent me a latch-key? Well, no. He had shown me how to get in the way he got in himself when he had lost his own key: it involved breaking into the cellar through the coal-chute and then crawling up the shaft of a disused kitchen lift. "It is a means of entry only possible to the undernourished," my acquaintance had said. "Burglars are far too prosperous." I quoted this to the policeman, who showed no sign of noting it in my favour. And this was the way I had gained entry to-day? Naturally: did the officer think I always went about with cobwebs in my hair?



This testiness was a tactical error, for the policeman caught the way of it too. "Neighbour, hey? Just dropped in, hey? Hardly what I'd call a neighbour, living four miles away. Hardly what the station sergeant would call a neighbour, if you ask me. Or the inspector. Anybody round here know you?" Not a soul. "You'd have no objection to me coming back home with you, to check up like?" None, except that we would be unable to get in without more burglary. It was because I had mislaid my own key that I was here.

By now we were near to open antagonism. Why, I demanded, waste time with me when my accomplice was upstairs, stuffing valuables into his bassoon? The policeman began rocking on his heels again and said I didn't have to worry about that; all that was being looked after, all right; nobody had to tell him how to do his job, not any more they didn't. His voice grew so rich that neither of us heard sounds from the back room. Then my acquaintance walked in, with another policeman. "Found this one climbing in through the cellar," the other policeman said. "Claims to be the owner of the house."

My acquaintance ignored us all.

He hunted for a cigarette and eventually found one inside a lantern clock. "I heard a racket going on and thought the place had been broken into or something," he said as if to himself. He opened a window and a ravaged black cat leaped in with a hoarse croon. He hunted vaguely for a match and at last came to me for one. "Seen you before somewhere, haven't I?" he said.

I was grateful at least for this, and left him to take over the complications from that point. I discovered later that the policemen were there for two more hours, and that one of them now takes his violin regularly on Friday evenings. If they have not asked me to make up a trio I am sure the reasons are purely musical.

FORTY YEARS ON

MY policy has now matured
And so, no doubt, have I;
But though I hold the Sum Assured
Assurance seems to die.

When young I kept my age in sight,
My principles were sound;
I took care of the pence all right—
But what's come over the Pound?



PROLETARIAN EMPORIA

UNTIL a couple of months ago the State Stores in the Soviet sector of Berlin played an important part in maintaining a cold-war *modus vivendi* of almost classical perfection. Its basis was that it hurt both sides considerably, while leaving each with the conviction that it hurt the other more.

As the rate of currency exchange was four East marks to one West mark, the discriminating West Berliner could come across the sector frontier and get considerable bargains in some lines. The West marks which flowed into the treasury of the East Zone Communist Government provided a fighting fund to aid the West German Communist party in its uphill struggle to overthrow the West German Government.

The West Berlin authorities, while deploring the loss of trade, considered it a small price to pay to give the Eastern authorities an incentive to keep the sector frontier open. It was obviously such a perfect arrangement for all concerned that it flourished exceedingly. State shops were opened up by the dozen just inside the East sector frontiers for the convenience of West Berliners, and notices were put up at all the crossing points: "The thrifty West Berliner buys at the Socialist State shops."

Then, suddenly, for some reason or other, the whole thing was stopped. The peripheral proletarian emporia were shut, stripped of goods and fittings, and now stand, cheap grey concrete shells, as if gutted

overnight by the scorching breath of a Kremlin ukase. Notices on the doors of the remaining State Stores in the permanent shopping centres of East Berlin announce that West Berliners attempting to buy, and shop assistants serving them, will get up to two years' hard labour, if not more. The Communist spider is now saying to the bourgeois fly: "Don't you dare step into my parlour."

Allied and "Allied sponsored" personnel are included in the ban. But no one has said that we may not just go inside to look.

The obvious place for such an expedition is the State Store at the Alexanderplatz. It is the biggest and best in East Berlin, which for propaganda reasons enjoys a specially favoured position. I removed various West Berlin warmongering newspapers from my overcoat pockets, divested myself of East Zone currency to reduce any risk of getting into trouble for loitering with intent to purchase, and took a return ticket from the Zoo station in West Berlin.

The East Berlin slogans department has dubbed the store "H.O.am Alex" (Handels Organization am Alexanderplatz), to give it a familiar homely Berlin cockney ring. It is eight stories high and about 100 yards square. By West European and West Berlin standards it is like a factory which was hastily erected to turn out one of the messier industrial products and was later converted into a shop with no

structural alteration other than the addition of plate glass display windows. The floors are rough concrete, cracked, clumsily patched and uncovered.

On a Saturday afternoon an endless grey column of standard-pattern Soviet proletarians trudge up or down the one-way dirty warehouse-type stairways. Most of the women wear drab woollen scarves over their heads, most of the men wear black chauffeur-type peaked caps. About one man in five was in uniform, usually the olive-green, high-collared tunic of the People's Police, which is almost indistinguishable from that of the Russian troops.

The various departments seemed to offer all the essentials and some modest comforts for life in the proletarian mould into which it has deliberately been cast. The quality stood in about the same relationship to British utility standards as these stand to British "export only" standards. Some goods—stationery, cosmetics, certain lines of clothing—would not have sold in England at any price. There was a big crowd round a roughly finished television set with a very small screen which seemed, however, to be working all right.

In the footwear department about forty people were sitting in a wide ring self-servicing themselves with shoes which were fed to them by two saleswomen. As one watched one realized suddenly that an intense social drama was going on. A pair of inferior, but probably serviceable shoes, cost about £20, or nearly a month's pay. In their agony complete strangers asked their neighbour for advice, shoes were passed round the circle, were bent, balanced, appraised, commented on. The saleswomen, in between getting much-used brown cardboard boxes from the shelves, would intervene good-naturedly but relentlessly at crucial moments.

A group of girls looked at tawdry fancy shoes in a show case, which looked as if they would crumple up like brown paper in the first shower of rain. "You see, we have quite smart modern designs now," one of them said. It was a lesson in politics for the onlooker.



Firstly, she had never seen decent shoes, and these were an improvement on what she had seen hitherto. Secondly, in every society, even in an iron curtain dictatorship, there is a big proportion of optimists who are quite unpolitical and seize on every sign to satisfy their craving to feel that things are getting better.

The food store, in a separate building a block away, was filled with hundreds of people waiting interminably but patiently to buy small quantities of meat and sausage of both of which there was a good supply, at anything up to fifteen shillings a pound.

There was plenty of bread at about one shilling a pound, no butter, and no unrationed fat except coconut butter at twelve shillings a pound.

A red streamer with white letters triumphantly proclaimed: "Tea from the Chinese People's Republic." It was selling in minute 10-gramme packets at a price that worked out at about forty-five

shillings a pound. From a shrine at the end of the greengrocery and fruit counter a framed portrait of Karl Marx gazed with revolutionary ardour at a pile of tiny speckled oranges, which looked as if they had only found asylum in Socialist East Berlin after being rejected as sub-standard by the whole of the capitalist world, and a basket of onions at a shilling each. This was, incidentally, all that the store had to offer in the way of fruit and vegetables, which are terribly short.

An even more sacred place was a small open space at the entry to the fish department, where there was a kind of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist altar. A suitably devotional backcloth was provided by charts and graphs showing the results over the past six months of the Socialist Emulation Competition between the various sales brigades in the store. The Clara Zetkin brigade was the winner, with the Young Guards second, Socialist Upbuilding third. The red line depicting the struggle

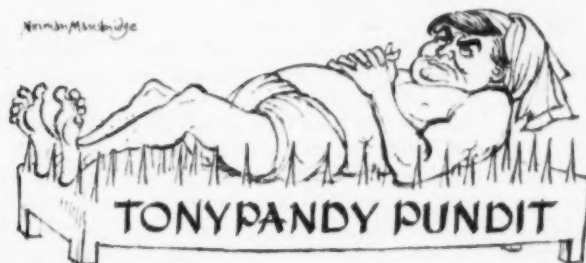
of the Ernst Thaelmann brigade against slackness and lack of socialist consciousness dipped at one point dangerously near the "inadequate" line at the bottom of the graph. I suddenly realized that I was attracting attention by stopping to look at it all, and moved on to the People's Democracies wine department, merging myself as best I could in the grey mass of proletarians shuffling along on the muddy floor.

"The car drove off again and Thomas Melling landed several punches on his back and put a hammer lock on the witness's left arm. The witness also had been gagged again. Weeber said that while the car was going Thomas Melling, after a long struggle, managed to get a rope around the witness's knees and also tied his hands above his head. The car was driven to the Cambridge golf course pavilion, where Thomas Melling again asked him to sign a statement, but he refused.

The luncheon adjournment was taken at this stage."

Wellington (N.Z.) Evening Post

High time, too.



"WE helped you gain your liberty," he said;
And we were mildly startled at his words,
Remembering many well-paid Welsh among
Our erstwhile earnest, irritant overlords.
He had a round face and a ready tongue,
A dark, undoubted elegance of dress
And those sleek lines that we associate
With secular success.

Also he had a grievance, some old zidd,
That drove him to assume we had one too:
His mind looked backwards, and he seemed to think
That we, being Indians, shared his point of view.
He spoke of us and our unending fight:
But whether "us" meant Indians, or the poor,
Or Welshmen, or the Chinese Communists,
We were not really sure.

We had had many such in the old days,
Barricades babies, rebels in their own right,
And found them less congenial later, when
We had only nature and ourselves to fight.
He had a quick brain and a smouldering eye
And something more insatiable than greed.
He would drive men before him with his tongue
To meet his private need.

"Our need is peace. We stand for peace," he said,
Seeing himself the mouthpiece of mankind;
And we all nodded, knowing there was no
Peace, nor the name of it, in his own mind.
"The struggle still goes on," the Welshman said,
And rose; and so we all got up to go.
But against whom this sleek man's struggle was
We did not really know.

P. M. HUBBARD



"BOAT-ROCKING MACHINE, ANYBODY?"

GRAND CLEARANCE SALE AT DENHAM

AUCTIONEERS, like doctors, cannot afford to take other people's troubles too much to heart, and those who yesterday moved into Denham's sprawling white palace of dreams, to crown a feast of cataloguing with a nine-days' sale, will no doubt be briskly unsentimental. They will knock down with impartial proficiency a tapestry from *Hamlet*, and one hundred and twenty assorted typewriters; a draped and quilted dressing-table from *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and nineteen pairs of paperhangers' trestles; a drum from *The Drum*, and innumerable square feet of brown office linoleum. They must get on. They have close on four thousand lots to dispose of and will have no time, as they coax up the bidding for one hundred and sixty-nine basement window frames, various (Lot 3306), to wonder whether, from a half-crown seat in the warm dark, they have ever seen the Misses Lockwood, Kent, Roc or Simmons peering wistfully through any of them.

You or I, however, who may be waiting for some item not yet on offer—a set of 35-ft. half-ton lifting chains, say, or a black-and-yellow stage-coach which once, as

inadequate overpainting reveals, impersonated the "Commodore," no less—can stroll at leisure down the long, now silent, corridors, where not so long ago buccaneers and African chiefs, fighter pilots, costers and Regency bucks, Tudor ladies-in-waiting and Boer War infantrymen all rushed and shoved and chattered together on their way to and from the stages, dressing-rooms and canteens . . . and we can feel a moment's sadness, if we wish. In dozens of these little square rooms on either side famous faces have been scrutinized and exercised and powdered, and their owners have frowned as they memorized the negligible snippets of a day's dialogue and then waited interminably for the summons to the set. Further along, in the men's crowd dressing-rooms, Shakespearean actors of a lifetime's experience have jostled for places at the forty-six mirrors, adjusting their cuirasses or lumberjacks' shirts, turbans or bandannas, doublets, kilts or immaculate evening dress, too glad of a day's filming to feel more than a twinge of wounded vanity. Now the mirrors are going, and the hand-basins and soap-dispensers, clothes-racks and

roller-towels, hair-dryers and wig-cleaning cabinets, make-up chairs, plastic shower-curtains, cream-painted dressing-tables and (star dressing-rooms only) baths. All going. Going, going and, in fact, gone. They were all under the hammer yesterday.

They may have been easier to find a good home for than some of the items yet to come. The auctioneer's traditional delight in marrying off the incongruous has had unbridled indulgence here, and one suspects that unusual satisfaction has been derived, for example, from forcing a semicircular-ended cash desk into the company of a police call box (Lot 3327), and uniting, in Lot 2665, an antique mahogany spinet with twenty-eight decorated wooden crossbows. Should your fancy be tickled by an eight-foot, eagle-headed Egyptian figure in peeling gilt you must also grow to love his nineteen anomalous companions, mostly chipped caryatids and gloomy gladiators, which are clustered around him, under a light dust, on the floor of the plasterer's shop, to compose Lot 3339. In the same place, however, are temptations even more

embarrassing to indulge. A rash hankering after one of the enriched mantelpieces, cornices or architraves here displayed may land you with "approx. 3,000 pieces," or the whole of Lot 3342, at a blow, including the impeccably simulated front door of a railway locomotive, stacks of Covent Garden baskets and enough plaster poultry and ship's figure-heads to last the average man a lifetime.

There is furniture in imposing quantities, old and new, good and bad—and good gone to the bad, which is a pity. Your film producer is by nature an *ad hoc* man, living for the film of the moment; his maintenance staff operate in sharp, inspired bursts when the needs of the shooting schedule press, but not otherwise. One or two valuable pieces are in fair shape, but for the most part it is only the material recently before the cameras that is ready to take its place in a discriminating drawing-room; and even then a close inspection may disclose a few *ad hoc* nailheads varnished over to deceive, or the loss of an ormolu boss made good with a handful of *ad hoc* plaster, gilded to taste: adequate for the original purpose but distasteful to a connoisseur.

It is all very sad, for those with time to think so. The empty theatre, the stripped stage, the fairground

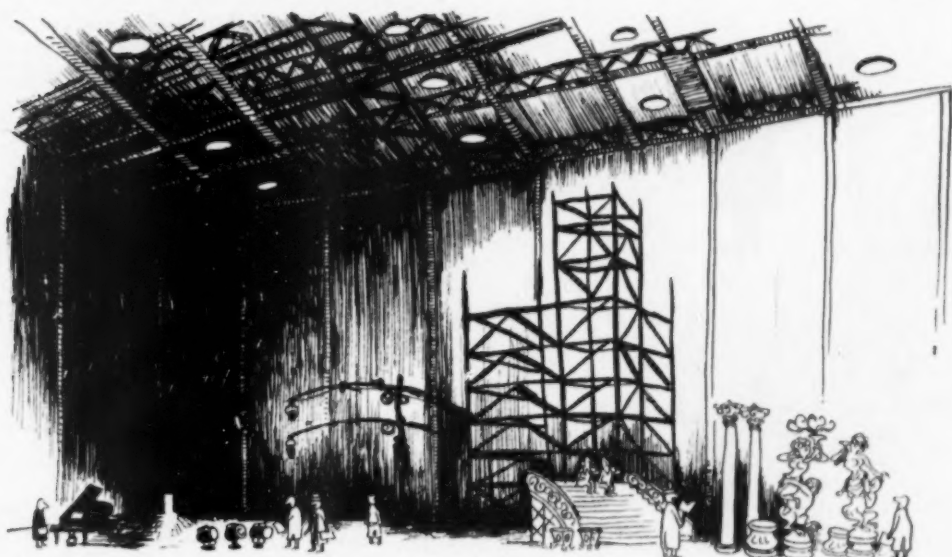
after the fair has moved on, these are notoriously evocative images, as none knows better than the movie-maker himself. But the deserted sound-stages of a film studio where films are being made no more (and probably never will be) have a heightened air of ghostfulness and melancholy. In Denham's great caverns, at one time or another, Ralph Richardson staggered, sun-blinded through the desert of *The Four Feathers*, Leslie Howard planned his Spitfire that was *The First of the Few*, David Niven rode up the monstrous celestial staircase of *A Matter of Life and Death*, Henry VIII lived his colourful if unhistorical *Private Life*, the *Ghost Went West*, *Things to Come* came, and young Jim Hawkins listened for the tapping of the blind man's stick. Now the silence, the semi-darkness and the emptiness, where light and colour and splendid confusion have reigned so long, seem more affecting than in any other forsaken arena. In these immense, soundproof boxes, where an airship could hang near the roof and scarcely be noted, all sorts of dreams have been given substance and sent out into a world which, despite a volume of information on the subject, really knows very little about those resources of art, imagination, science, technical skill and sheer sweat of the brow that

combine to present it with a close-up of its favourite face. Perhaps this makes it all the more dolesome for the visitor: the suspicion that the average cinema-goer is too ignorant to grieve.

Not, it should perhaps be added, that the selling-up is a grief to Mr. J. Arthur Rank. It is, so far as can be gathered, just a sensible business move. If the appetite for Rank films can be satisfied at Pinewood—just round the corner, in terms of the long black saloon—then Denham's acres of amenities, which need full exploitation to balance their costly overheads, must go . . . even if it means that the lion and the lizard keep the courts where Laughton gloried and drank deep. And if, to the layman, it seems a little odd that a man still making films should want to dispose of such objects, valuable to the film-maker but in relatively small demand elsewhere, as aircraft interiors, four-wheeled broughams, timber and glazed house-fronts, and engines designed to produce snow, waves, fog and a rocking motion in boats—well, it is no business of his.

He may be allowed to hope, all the same, that the next Pinewood production isn't hung up at a crucial stage for a "Bamboo open frame circular ape cage" (Lot 2849): if it is, Mr. Rank will kick himself for letting it go.

J. B. BOOTHROYD



JUST ONE OF THOSE TALKS

IT would not be true to say of Mudinjûri (but what is the truth anyway?) that he was the most important Kurdish poet of the present century, for this would be to neglect the writings of the Hadabani Ilkâ Môr and the diversionary Uzbeg Bahtât; yet it may well be that his work will survive when the songs of these men are forgotten. Of his life not much is known. His birthplace is obscure, and he seems to have had no certain place of residence. Of his death there are two accounts, equally unsubstantiated—the first, that he died in a brawl when only twenty-seven; the second, that he lived to an extreme old age, and merely sank into the sand. Nor would his poems themselves have been discovered had it not been for the indefatigable labours of the Dutch explorer Doctor Niet Hooch, aided by Sidi Customah, the ex-Governor of Tiflis, and the Oriental scholar Teinjenz. It was the whim of Mudinjûri to carve his quatrains on sheep-bones and bury them in the desert before striking his tent and moving on; but he marked the place of their interment by leaving a camel's skull on the site, and it was the curious pattern made by these

skulls in the wilderness that first attracted the notice of the explorer.

The prosody of Mudinjûri is in no way aligned with the more recent poetry of the West. He is neither symbolist nor imagist, and to style him a conceptualist would be absurd. It would be unsafe to stamp him as a metagrobolist or even an obfuscarian. It would be dangerous to call him a furibundal. In his lifetime, perhaps, it would have been dangerous to call him anything; and owing to his use of an extremely difficult Persian dialect mixed with idioms from the Turkish and Mongolian, and even the Cimmerian, his language is very difficult to translate. But there is no doubt that he wrote with directness—nay, even with ferocity, and his ideas have a gem-like precision that can only be characterized as smaragdine.

A soft voice intervenes:

"The night is a carpet of darkness
But the morning is a scimitar dipped in blood,
Red are the fetlocks of my horses
But not with the rays of the sun."

The effect of this poem can only be appreciated when it is realized that the words for carpet, scimitar, and fetlock are almost identical, and with a slight alteration of accent can be made to sound exactly the same.

The gentle voice again:

"The Great Khan of Moscow sent a messenger
Asking for ten thousand skins;
We sent him one skin only—
The skin of his messenger."

This refers most probably to a nomadic custom among the Yezidis of flaying their enemies in a camp kettle, and is some indication of the rebellious mood which marks so many of Mudinjûri's stanzas.

But he can be wistful at times.

The sweet voice once more:

"The mare's milk of my hatred
Is fermenting in my brain,
For the tents have been lifted
And the women are gone.

My wives have departed with their lovers
And taken my kaftan away.
Only the ash-dung of memory
And the hemp-seed of sorrow remain."

He reminds us here, as Wunfurthode rightly remarks, of Zumbooruk.

He can also be gnomic . . .

(But this, unhappily, was where we had to turn off.)

EVOE





"The Corporation declined to elaborate yesterday on the means by which the description would be given, but said they would 'not necessarily' send their own observers."—*Daily Telegraph*

STAND BACK AND LET THE PRESS SEE THE AIR FORCE

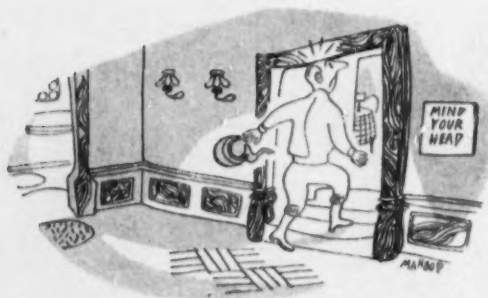
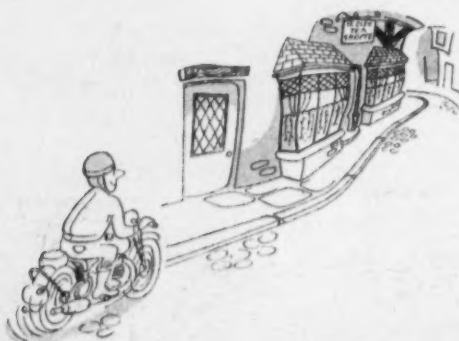
THE admiral says he'll take you with him this time, instead of me," said Cranmer.

"Where to?" asked Purbright.

"Down where the Air Force teach their young men, and ours, to fly. To-morrow afternoon the Air Officer Commanding pins the wings on the vast band of successful pale-blue characters, and then the admiral does the same to his little bunch of boys in navy blue."

"What do I do?" asked Purbright.

"You go down in the car with the admiral," said Cranmer. "You provide yourself with six wings, six pins and a flag, rear admiral's car. You stick the flag on the bonnet, and, choosing your moment, you stuff the six wings in the admiral's side pocket."



"What a moment to have to choose!" said Purbright.

"You arrange that the car arrives at 1424, two minutes before the Air Officer Commanding, who is senior—if this is thinkable with respect to an admiral—to the admiral."

"I see," said Purbright.

"On arrival at the Air Force station you stumble out of the car. You do not confine yourself to tripping over your own sword, you trip over the admiral's as well, getting the two swords so entangled that it takes a positive effort of seamanship, lasting two minutes, to disentangle them. By this time the A.O.C. should have arrived and should, if possible, be helping you to untie yourselves. You should titter steadily throughout."

"Won't the admiral object to all this?"

"Object?" exclaimed Cranmer. "These are his instructions I am transmitting."

"Oh," said Purbright. He scratched his head. "Why can't you go yourself?"

"My leave has been approved," said Cranmer. "Starting to-morrow."

"Oh," said Purbright again.

"The admiral," said Cranmer, continuing swiftly, "will be smoking a cigar. He decided against a half-bottle of Higginson's Downy Spanish Main Rum. Clean fun is what we want, he said to me, not an orgy. Where was I?"

"I'm down on my knees with an air marshal and a rear admiral in a pool of swords," said Purbright.

"You will then, arm-in-arm with the admiral, shamle across the grass to the saluting base. To the right of the base you will find two chairs. On these you and the admiral will sit while the air marshal pins wings uncountable upon the breasts of his young men. Your shoe-laces should be undone and you should yawn as frequently as possible, rolling poker-dice in your upturned cap. When the air marshal has worked through his lot, he will beckon the admiral over. Removing his sword from his gullet, the admiral—"

"Removing his sword from his what?" asked Purbright.

"From his gullet," said Cranmer. "He is working up for the ship's company concert, and intends to take this opportunity to practise his sword-swallowing act. Having replaced his sword in its scabbard, he will stick a straw in his mouth and wander over to the saluting base, trying all his pockets for wings. As his young men come forward he will toss their wings at them from a range of four yards, crying 'Butterfingers!' or 'Well held, young sir, by Godfrey!' as appropriate."

"What happens then?" asked Purbright.

"As soon as he gets rid of the last one, the admiral slaps the air marshal on the back and rolls off the parade ground, telling you in a loud voice that long and complicated anecdote of his—the one about the Arab

dhov, the bear, the shark-hook and the A.D.C. to the Governor of Sokotra."

"It seems to me," said Purbright, "that the affair is unlikely to redound to the credit of the Navy."

"That's the object," said Cranmer. "Last year the bearing of the naval contingent was so smart that it stole the show. The way the local papers wrote it up you might have thought the parade had taken place not at an Air Force station but on board a battleship to which a handful of airmen had been temporarily attached for fun. The smartness of the Navy boys, wrote one correspondent, stood out as does the silver lining of some large drab cloud. The admiral is resolved that this shall not happen again. One never knows these days, he told me furtively, when one may not need the help of some gigantic shore-based aeroplane. But rather than tell his own young men to go easy, he decided to go easy himself."

"Very easy," said Purbright. "And do you think the plan will succeed?"

"My own view," said Cranmer, "is that the Navy may steal the show again. But I never give my own view to admirals. Not when I'm just off on leave."

SONNET

"Scorn not the sonnet . . ."—Wordsworth: *Sonnets*

SCORN not the sonnet on the sonnet, critic;

It is a bank where poets love to lie

And praise each other's ingenuity

In finding such a form. The analytic

Reader may stigmatize as parasitic

This mirror-image of a mystery,

This echo of lost voices, find it dry

And intellectually paralytic.

Yet 'tis a child of Fancy, light and live,

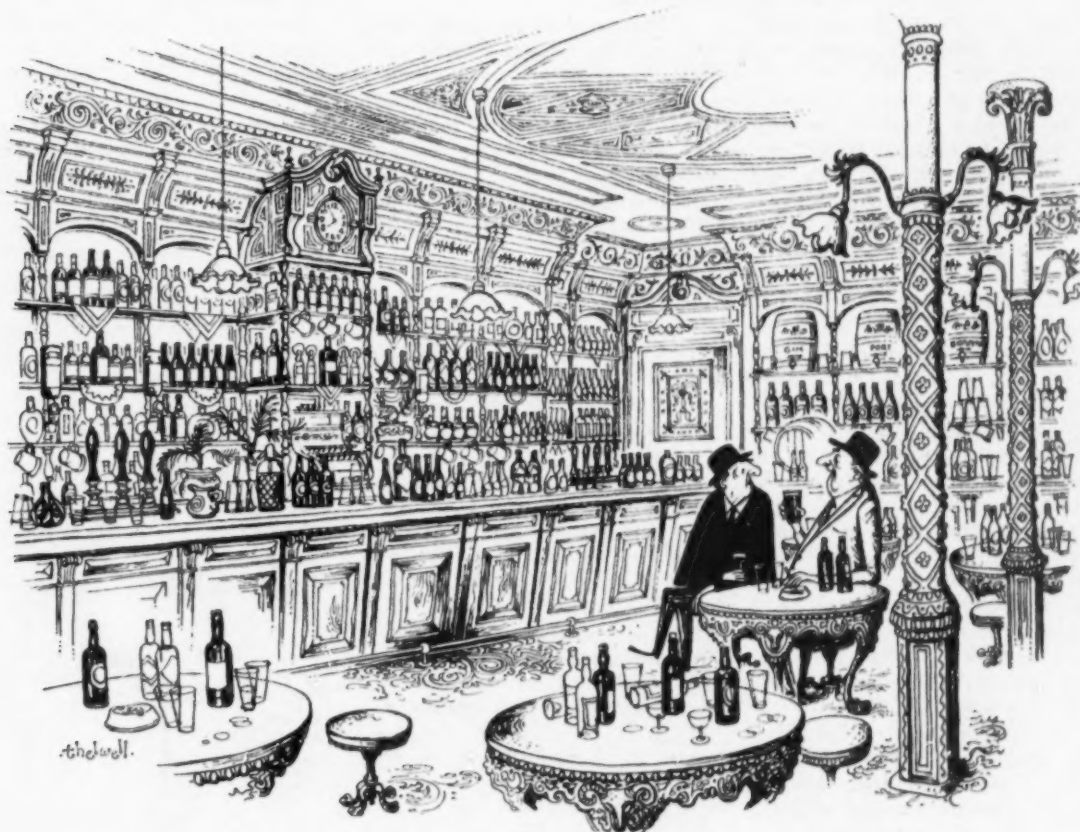
A fragile veil of Nature, scarcely worn

(Of Wordsworth's two, of Shakespeare's none, survive).

Empty not then the vials of scorn upon it.

Nor, since we're on the subject, should you scorn

The sonnet on the sonnet on the sonnet.



"Nice homely atmosphere this place has, Charlie."

A VISIT TO HARWELL

I WAS very well taught at school a large number of things, most of which I have subsequently discovered to be untrue. I learnt my history from Mr. Aldous Huxley, for whom in about 1919 I had to write an essay explaining why there could never again be any dictators in the modern world; and, when I turned from history to science, a delightfully unfrocked clergyman spent the greater part of a term telling us how the atom could never be split. I remembered it well because my misdemeanours led me to have to write out a hundred and fifty times: "You cannot split the atom, because if you did, it would not be the atom"—which was at any rate logic, even if it was nonsense. Then I went on to Oxford, and there they told me that the atom might be split, but, if it was, it would not make any difference to anybody.

We live and learn, and so I reflected when I went to visit Harwell. I presented myself, like Dante, at the gates of Hell, and there was given what looked like a piece of india-rubber, which I must wear—so I was told—to prevent my bones from rotting away. I took an oath to reveal none of the secrets that I might learn to Stalin—an oath which I have had no difficulty in keeping, as I did not understand one word in fifty thousand that was said to me. I plunged down into what I may call the semi-bowels of the earth. There I found myself looking at clocks which went round the wrong way and strange zinc funnels with horrible functional lines that pierced up into the outer air. Strange young scientists came up on pneumatic elevators from the depths proper of hell and gave to me wholly unintelligible explanations of what I was seeing.

"From the Bulmer formula and the quantum theory postulates, it follows," one of them said, "that the hydrogen atom has a single sequence of stationary states. You understand, of course?"

"No," I said.

"That's right," he said, "you

see, the numerical value of the energy in the n th state is Rh/n^2 . You see that?"

"No," I said.

"That's right," he said.

"He means," said the other one, "that if you fired a lot of balls out of a sort of cannon they would all bound off when they came up against the—er—the—er—what d'you call it?"

"But have you fired a lot of balls out of a cannon?" I asked.

"No," he said.

"I understand perfectly," I said.

"This is the century of the common man," said the other scientist. "We don't believe in putting things in highfalutin language."

"These politicians," said the first scientist, "they think that they can control us, but even the best of them don't understand the first thing about it."

"There was a bishop the other day," said his colleague, "who said that he believed in God. I cannot understand the impertinence of people in the twentieth century who talk about what they cannot understand."

"But how many of you do understand what is going on here?" I asked.

"Oh, of course, quite a lot of people understand their particular department," they explained, "but very few indeed can see the whole picture."

"Tewkinson, I suppose you might say, understands it all," said the first scientist.

"I suppose so," said the other scientist, "but then he's dumb, so there's no way of knowing. Thompson did understand it, too. But he's dead, of course."

"Of course," said the first scientist, "but he's dead, and, since he never wrote down what he had discovered intelligibly, no one will ever know what he did understand."

"Well, then," I said, "what it comes to is that there are you two."

"Oh, I wouldn't say . . ." they began together.

"This has nothing whatsoever to do with atom bombs," they said. "This is only concerned with atomic

development for beneficent industrial purposes."

"And how do you develop it?" I asked.

"Well, you see those two buttons in the floor in front of you." I saw them. "When we have carried our researches a little bit further, then it will be possible by pressing the right-hand button to release energy which will enable you to travel from here to New York in five minutes."

"And if I press the left-hand button?" I asked.

"Ah, well," said one of the scientists, "that might be serious. That might set up a nuclear reaction which would disrupt the universe."

"As a matter of fact," said the other, "it's the right-hand button which will disrupt the universe and the left-hand button which will carry you to New York."

"No, it isn't," said the first. "It's the other way round."

"Of course it isn't," said the second.

"Of course it is," said the first.

"A lot of people have very exaggerated ideas about these explosions," they told me. "There is no real reason to think that they would destroy all life on this planet. They would merely destroy all human life."

At this moment in wandered a stray and very mangy cat, lay down very firmly on both buttons, and nothing happened whatsoever.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





"WHERE WEALTH ACCUMULATES . . ."

I OWN (in all save the drollest, airiest sense of legal curlicues set roundly down) a slice of England, cut like Horner's pie from the richest pasture-crust, and stuffed with plums: a manor house (not now my residence), three villages, a small, Time-cared-for town, a river full of chub and eels and dace, and spanned, two bow-shots from the market-place, by an arched bridge, weathered as graciously as the grey church the Normans built close by: all these are mine, besides such scattered crumbs as The Seven Stars, The Drover, The Dewdrop Inn, The Boy and Barrel, and The George and Crown.

I like to walk abroad my lands, to see which fields lie fallow, what fences need repair, where in her form lies close the trembling hare, how the beasts weather the winter, and how fare in these hard times my frugal tenantry. True, they no longer touch their caps to me, but in The Drover, or The Dewdrop Inn (where I drink pints of ale, and they swig gin) they nod, or greet me with a sunny frown.

Their talk is redolent of machinery as are their clothes of chemical manure. It is good to hear them argue heatedly about which type of phosphates will procure the best results or tell some country tale about the man who didn't know how to drench a carburettor. I listen and drink my ale while they order another round of gin-and-French. They do not recognize their overlord—Ah well. The times are changed. He understands. What baffles him is how they can afford the taxes which they pay on his broad lands?

R. C. SCRIVEN



E. H. Shepard



Plate 1

The New Edwardians

Clothes and the Welfare State

CLOTHES AND THE WELFARE STATE

I - The New Edwardians



WE live in an Age of Transition—as Adam and Eve said, walking out of the Garden of Eden. The joke itself is not quite so old. Shem may have muttered something to the same effect when he was evacuating the Ark. And, of course, all ages are ages of transition even if the mind rejects the notion and insists on believing in little islands of Time in which nothing changes—until you row over to the next island and, suddenly, everything is different. Yet when we picture the present moment we are never on the island; we are always in the boat.

So we really don't know whether we have already set foot on this Promised Land called the Welfare State or are merely rowing madly towards it. And the whole thing is complicated by the fact that some of us think we have already got there, and don't like it, and some of us don't believe there is such a place. We are the epoch of the divided mind, and if schizophrenia is a certifiable mental malady, we should all be locked up.

Look at the clothes we wear; for if nothing is more non-committal than nudity, nothing is more revealing than clothes. Clothes may cover the body; they uncover the mind; they even make a pretty good job of exposing the soul. Between the stiff collar and the open shirt lies the whole range of political opinion. The tie is an index of the appetite for amorous adventure. The height of the hat is the gauge of masculine domination.

It is only necessary to go out into the streets of London, to walk (let us say) along Piccadilly, through Soho and into Tottenham Court Road, to detect the divided mind visible in the clothes of men. For, at the corner of Bond Street perhaps, you will see a group of young men who seem to have stepped bodily out of another epoch. They wear rather long jackets, their trousers have tight legs, their bowler hats have curly brims and look just a size too small, and their waistcoats are "rich not gaudy," as old Polonius said all clothes should be. They are gloved, of course, and well-shod; they carry little canes, and their air has a faint aura of disapproval, as if they did not care much for the modern world.

They do not care for the modern world. They are the New Edwardians and their clothes register a discreet but definite protest against every aspect of modernity from motor-cars to income tax. Especially income tax. For what they are saying, in the language of Fashion, is: "I do wish I got five per cent clear on my investments as old Uncle George used to do!"

or "If only we could put the clock back fifty years we would stand ourselves a glass of champagne at the Cri'."

Men have often regretted the Past, but the startling thing about the New Edwardians is that they *are* new, something new in history. Never before in the long story of male attire has there been so obvious an attempt to wear the clothes of a previous generation. Even the aristocrats who returned to France after the fall of Napoleon never attempted this deliberate abolition of an epoch. Even the Ultras, except at Court, wore the clothes of the new dandyism, not the clothes of the *Ancien Régime*. The man who appeared in the streets of Paris in 1815 in the embroidered coat and the lace frills of the eighteenth century was merely dismissed as an old foggy. Our New Edwardians are not old fogies. They are Guardsmen in mufti, young men who gave a good account of themselves at Salerno or El Alamein. They are fine specimens of manhood; they are the dandies of to-day.

But two swallows do not make a summer, still less the summer before last; and the Welfare State is not peopled by New Edwardians. On the contrary. Most of the citizens have no desire at all to return to "the bad old days," and the clothes they wear express quite a different *Weltanschauung*. They no longer even try to imitate the clothes of the gentry. They have their own ideas. Fifty years ago social differences were shown more by the condition of men's garments than their shape. Social differences were shown by fine materials at one end of the scale and rags at the other. Class distinction was often a mere matter of personal cleanliness. All that has vanished. To-day nobody is in rags and everybody is clean.

The new difference that shows itself is not a difference in degree but a difference in kind. The clothes of those who have shaken off the superstition of gentility (that's one way of putting it) are completely different in shape and cut from those of the New Edwardians. Their trousers are wide instead of narrow, their shoulders are broader than Nature made them and, instead of the little bowler hat, they affect a soft felt with curious new indentations—preferably bashed in at the back. In a word, they have adopted American modes, the sinister hat of the Chicago gangster, the exaggerated shoulders of the would-be tough guy. They believe in personal prowess, not in obedience to a code. Their shirts are in lumber-jack checks; their ties express an unabashed devotion to the opposite sex. They think the New Edwardians "sissy."

It is a curious paradox that the clothes which are so expensively bespoke and tailored to fit the client should be so impersonal, and the mass-made clothes should be so individual, at least in intention. They are both the clothes of men—*young* men—who wear what they want to wear. It is the underlying philosophy that is different. And there are the two extremes. And if we knew which way the world was going we could prophesy which mode will prevail.

JAMES LAVER

CANVEY DIARY

WEDNESDAY. Hear with relief "Lobster Smack" still standing at Holehaven, Canvey Island, and Mrs. Went, old friend and licensee, safe and in action. Decide must take old boat down and save Mrs. Went next flood. Old boat lying empty, dirty and damp, all winter. Nothing on board but clock and fire-extinguisher. Last week water-burglars took both.

Thursday. Commission ship.

Friday. Sail for Canvey, 46 (land) miles. Rename ship *Deliverer*. No time to scrub off filthy scars of winter. Looks like a zebra, but white stripes few. Arctic cold. Engines heroic, so far. Reach Canvey after dark. Find P.L.A. pontoon no longer there. Never mind. Must use dinghy landing-stage and causeway and clamber up enormous sea-wall by steps. Steps covered with ice. No weather for yachting. Never mind. Find Mrs. Went alive, brave and perky after awful adventures. River came over enormous wall just behind pub. Wonderful escape. Six cats, black dog and bar in action, too. Arrange save Mrs. Went in dinghy. Meet walkie-talkie Air Force boys on

sea-wall. Their job unenviable. Report if water comes over or through. But then what happens to walkie-talkie boys? Work out plan save walkie-talkie boys in case of breach. Drop anchor below breach and send crew off in dinghy on long line. Return *Deliverer*. Tide falling, dinghy on concealed rock, passenger embarking makes nasty hole in bottom with one foot, with other foot treads on oar and snaps off blade. A right and left. Never mind. Not his fault. Now have unseaworthy dinghy and one oar. Prospects of Mrs. Went and walkie-talkie boys less favourable.

Saturday. Wake find *Deliverer* covered with snow. Looks better. Dinghy full of water. Starboard engine refuses duty. Plod down Reach on one engine looking for sandbag-place. Snow storm. Can see nothing. Starboard engine still mutinous. Every two hours bail dinghy out with bucket. Return Holehaven. Crew miraculously finds excellent mechanic, Mr. Hall, who toils all Saturday afternoon. Make plans save walkie-talkie boys without dinghy, laying *Deliverer* alongside wall.

Sunday. Renew quest for sandbags. Steam round island to Benfleet, 2 miles away by land, nearly nine by sea, have to go half-way to Southend to avoid sands, spits, etc. Make Benfleet in good time, hour before high water. No one seems very keen on *Deliverer* transporting sandbags. On whole think they are right. Dump accursed dinghy ashore. Loading party arrive at last, fill pontoon, crowd aboard, but tide now falling. Feel sure shall go aground. Never mind. Man says "That's my pontoon." Apologize. Pontoon aground already, *Deliverer* hauls. Tide carries her into moored boats. All remaining islanders yell contradictory advice. Starboard engine keeps stopping. Port engine goes mad. *Deliverer* clear at last, but meanwhile man annexes pontoon with our sandbags and steams down river, followed by *Deliverer* with loading party. Very peaceful watching water and darkness descend. Very grateful to be on flat sandbank and not on edge of one of the steep banks like brown cliffs of Dover. Turn on wireless. Rum a great comfort.

Monday. Midnight. Fine stars. Orion, Sirius, and Co. Five searchlights on mainland hills light up twisty channels. Very decorative, but damn cold. *Deliverer* floats and cautiously picks her way back. Perhaps may still save walkie-talkie boys on new wall guarding railway. Not a sign of walkie-talkie boys. All well.

Glorious morning. Calm. Steam out and up to Tilbury, against tide both ways, towing accursed dinghy, which is now a mere bath. Six hours. Give short tow to lighthouseman rowing out to Chapman Light. Perhaps most useful deed of whole expedition.

Tuesday. Steam up to Hammer-smith, 4½ hours, including dinghy bailing. Mileage steamed, 125. Sandbaggage supplied, 30. Towage, 1 lighthouseman. Never mind. St. George did not get a dragon every day. Big thing, Canvey is safe, for moment. Wonderful work by big brains at "Red Cow" and brave bodies on sea walls. Full marks.

A. P. H.



"I've finished with it, thanks."

IMPRESSIONS of PARLIAMENT

Monday, February 16

There was some really dramatic 3-D stuff in the Commons to-day, with *The Trial of Nutty Slack* as the first feature attraction. Mr. GEOFFREY LLOYD appeared as Counsel for the Defence, and he put up such a moving case that a few people on the jury were clearly moved in favour of the accused. But, just as clearly, the

House of Commons:
The Trial of Nutty Slack

the country had used two million tons more coal this winter than last. And he placed at the disposal of the chilled householder some 600,000 tons of coke. Mixed with nutty slack, it seems, this makes a wonderful fire, and with a modicum of "ordinary coal" (as Mr. LLOYD rather unkindly put it) it will even give some warmth.

The verdict, as football writers are apt to say, was never in doubt, and nutty slack left the court with a whopping great stain on its character.

Sir ARTHUR SALTER and Sir WALDRON SMITHERS, two very unlikely producers of comedy, then took over. Sir A. referred Sir W. to an earlier Government statement, and Sir W. cried: "A rotten one!" When this tiny contribution to the gaiety of nations had received its full Monday measure of applause, which took about two minutes, its author apologized for it, and Sir A. beamed acceptance. What made it Parliamentary history (in a manner of speaking) was that an apology had been tendered without the prior intervention of the Chair.

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN was cheered when he announced that the United States Government would, in future, consult us beforehand when any big decision had to be made in international affairs. He added that we still thought a blockade of the Chinese mainland would be a "mistake."

Almost with the sort of pang one feels about the imminent departure for Another Place of an old friend, the House turned to the Third Reading of the Transport Bill, and Mr. LENNOX-BOYD gracefully thanked everybody within range for their tolerance and helpfulness. Special congratulations went to Mr. JIM CALLAGHAN (the Opposition's chief transport expert) for the deft manner in which he had contrived to get his own telling speeches in, complete, allowing the swishing blade of the guillotine to fall on the oratory of others.

Some of his hearers regarded as rather dangerous Red stuff the Minister's revolutionary claim that "the interests of the user of transport are more important than those of the provider of transport." In spite of this unorthodox view, in these Nationalized days, the Third Reading was carried, late at night, by the substantial majority of 39 votes, and Mr. CHURCHILL led the cheering.



members of the jury opposite returned an alternative verdict of "Guilty of Creating a Public Nuisance, to wit one Smog or Fog."

One witness stated that nutty slack produced that adage-defying phenomenon, smoke without fire, but this Mr. LLOYD denied, if a trifle doubtfully. He was much firmer in denying nutty slack's responsibility for the fog, and pleaded that the amount of such fuel in use in London at the time of the fog was "infinitesimal."

Evidence was then brought that ordinary coal was no better than it should be, and Mr. NABARRO (apparently innocently) claimed that he had "concrete" evidence that stones were to be found in domestic coal supplies.

Anyway, retorted Mr. LLOYD,



Tuesday, February 17

The Government's plans to supply jet aeroplanes to Egypt, in accordance with contract, produced a quiet, sincere, and queerly moving debate.

House of Commons:
Jets for Egypt
House of Lords:
Hope in the Air

Mr. HUGH DALTON raised the question, and asked that the Government should look carefully into a policy which might have most unfortunate results for peace in the Middle East. He asked that it be remembered that, if all the countries were treated on precisely equal terms, this would mean that the Arab States would, collectively, get five times as many jet aircraft as Israel. What the Government ought to do was to try to get peace in the Middle East.

But Mr. SELWYN LLOYD, for the Foreign Office, claimed that the numbers of aircraft involved were "extremely small" and that as non-delivery would involve breaking contracts and Treaties, it was not worth it. Anyway, if we did not supply the machines, some other Government with far less knowledge of, or care for, the balance of things in the Middle East would certainly do so.

Mr. SYDNEY SILVERMAN protested that contracts never had bound Governments when international peace was threatened by their fulfilment. And Mr. ERIC JOHNSON, from the Government benches, added his protest against the sale—adding that he supposed contracts had to be fulfilled, but that they ought not to be renewed.

Mr. DALTON had proclaimed his intention not to "hide under the skirts of history" in presenting his case, but others seemed to go back a good way into the past—one 2,000 years—in defence or criticism of the Government.

Before all this, Mr. EDEN, in more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger tones, had declared that the Sudan's new freedom would certainly include the right to join the Commonwealth—a fact which General Neguib seemed to contest. The silence in the House had an ominous touch about it.

Their Lordships were considering the whole problem of building jet and other civil aircraft, and Lord "REX" WINSTER had something pungent to say on the subject of our perpetually trailing along (as he put it) behind the Americans. He said this in what he calls his

quarterdeckly manner; but Lord MANCROFT kept to his own suave, but not less effective, style even when he declared that the nation would be "mad" if it neglected the existing chance to sell great numbers of jet aircraft in overseas markets. Evidently communications with Another Place are none too good, for Labour Lords were firmly demanding greater production and

between order and fulfilment and everything's fine, thanks.

Wednesday, February 18

With the seemingly perennial Transport Bill safely speeded to the Lords, the Commons brightened visibly to-day at the thought that the Steel Bill will soon pass that way too. The prospect made yet another instalment of the Committee stage bearable—just.

Enough heat was generated, at Question-time, about eggs and milk, to have made a custard. Much of the talk was custard-pie stuff anyway.

Thursday, February 19

Beginning with the passing, *nemine contradicente*, of a graciously-worded motion of condolence with the Dutch and Belgian people, as well as our own sufferers from the floods, and warm thanks to all who had given aid, the Commons to-day made amends for over-partisanship on a previous occasion by discussing the situation in a very nearly non-partisan atmosphere. Many useful suggestions were made, and the Home Secretary took careful note of them all.

Friday, February 20

An interesting day's discussion on Private Members' motions, with Mr. CHRIS HOLLIS telling the House something about the loss of good agricultural land to builders and such. Excitement was kept well within bounds.

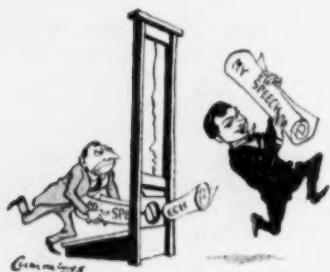
GUY EDEN



Mr. DALTON: I was deliberately not wanting to hide under the skirts of history.

export at the very time when their elected colleagues down the corridor were taking the opposite line.

The Air Minister, Lord De L'ISLE AND DUDLEY, V.C., was able to give even Lord WINSTER cheering news, for there is positively *no lag*



The Hon. Member for Cardiff, South-East (Mr. Callaghan) . . . found it possible to allow others, rather than himself, to be guillotined.

OF TO-DAY'S DATE

FEBRUARY 25 is a date that appeals to all connoisseurs of Anniversaries. Goldoni was born, Elizabeth I excommunicated, and the Battle of Paso de la Patria left undecided. It was a busy day. The Jameson Raiders reached London from Plymouth, and the historical imagination follows them as they canter up from the West-country to Charing Cross, greeting the plaudits of admirers with gay, reckless waves of looped-up hats and the hisses of Little Englanders with the slash of a crop on a gaitered calf. On arrival they had to share the limelight with one of the stages by which the Wallace Collection passed to public ownership, with the formation of the second Derby-Disraeli ministry and with the appointment of Lord Halifax to succeed Mr. Eden as Foreign Secretary.

In France the Duke of Orleans was taken to Clairvaux, Colonel Picquart and others were punished for "Intervention" and M. Méline was elected President of the Chamber. On the whole, February was a busier month in France than in England, but the regrettable tendency of French events to happen on the 26th, rather than the 25th, excludes them from a periodical published on Wednesday. However, the reconstruction of Germany at the Diet of Ratisbon makes up for it. Nothing like a good make-weight, I often say.

I also say, though not quite so often, how glad I am that J. W. Stocks reached Edinburgh. He had left London on the 24th, if I may mention it without cheating, and taken 20 hrs. 52 mins. over the journey. He was "on a 15-h.p. De Dion motor-car," and one sees him, perched far up above the winding English roads and finding Scotland in February coldish. There may, of course, have been a heat-wave; but one would need a rather specialized kind of reference-book to check that. I prefer to ignore the winter climate of Scotland and concentrate on the more pleasing subject of Miss Bowes of Durham,

the richest heiress in Europe. Before she received the vast additions to her fortune that followed the death of her mother and the immense estates that somewhat assuaged her grief for the demise of her uncle, she had £1,040,000. On February 25 she married the Earl of Strathmore, undisturbed by the preparations for the Battle of Benevento on the 26th. Her later life was variegated and included being abducted by her second husband and some complicated proceedings in the King's Bench; but her later life is unfortunately irrelevant.

Once one has let one's mind stray beyond the narrow limits of an anniversary, one is done. Completely irrelevant information keeps catching one's eye. For example, the *Everyman Dictionary of Dates* tells me that on Jan. 6 in Russia there was an "abortive attempt at a census." No doubt it was a good try, frustrated by the inability of Russians to recognize saboteurs in time. They promote them and promote them only to discover when it is too late that their warm hearts have been deceived once again.

I find it still more distracting to be told that in March 1903 Professor Molisch of Prague reported a lamp illuminated by means of bacteria. My edition of *Haydn's Dictionary of Dates* is a responsible looking volume and it seems likely to have good grounds for any statement to which it gives house-room.

I cannot be certain that when several varieties of carnation were planted in England by Flemings about 1567 it was not done on

February 25. I suppose these Flemings were trippers, unless the planting was some kind of sabotage. I rather doubt that February, even late February—and this was not a Leap Year—could have been suitable for planting. It is unlikely that surreptitious glasshouses were erected.

I am guessing when I say it was not a Leap Year. The date is before the Reform of the Calendar and I can never comfortably work out the consequences of that "Leap Year in the Dark" as one of the Pitts (possibly Zasu) may have called it. The political sense of the stout Englishry told them, as it usually does, that they had been done. "Give us back our eleven days," they howled. The Ministry stood firm but a weaker administration might well have repaid them, with interest.

With an effort I wrench my attention back to February 25, when Ciano visited Warsaw, Ireland beat Scotland 12—3 and Admiral Bedford punished the Brass Chiefs. They were probably over-excited, as *Haydn's* comment on the first of the month is "Many surrenders, festivities, races, etc.," and he is not the man to sensationalize life in Nigeria.

R. G. G. PRICE

Self Service

"Mr. Nelson Henderson (aged 32), a R.N. reserve officer, is to set out on September 10 for the Cafe of Good Hope in search of a 258-year-old treasure worth the equivalent of £10,000,000."—*Birmingham Mail*



at the PLAY

The Shrike (PRINCES)—*A Woman of No Importance* (SAVOY)

IN giving its cherished prize to *The Shrike*, the Pulitzer Committee goes on record as believing that the more infantile processes of psychiatry can be effectively substituted for dramatic action. Mr. JOSEPH KRAMM's clinical strip of fourteen scenes in a New York mental hospital does little to support its optimism.

The shrike, as we have all hurriedly informed ourselves, is a butcher bird with the unpleasing habit of impaling its victims on thorns until the right moment for eating them. In the play the shrike is a possessive wife, the thorns are a group of owlish doctors grinding her husband into madness with Freudian nursery games. These are played in very slow time, and the approach to the patient has as much humanity as an elderly mechanic dismembering a choked carburettor. The man and his wife live apart, and she wants him back on her own terms. Having got him into hospital after his attempt at suicide she puts on a golden-hearted act, keeps his mistress

at bay, and subtly encourages the authorities to doubt his sanity. There is nothing they like better. From being merely miserable and convinced of failure he becomes a desperate creature in a cage, his only chance of escape to persuade his wife of the palpable untruth that he still loves her, so that she will remove him into her custody. In a final interrogation, during which his nerves are so tattered that no hospital could possibly have released him, he is given the all-clear and departs, with murder undoubtedly in his eye.

Frankly, we don't care. His wife may deserve it, and she may not. We have been told so little about her that we have had no chance to know. There has been no show-down. She is simply a tight-lipped visitor played slightly sinisterly by Miss CONSTANCE CUMMINGS within these rigid limits, and seen at intervals against a background of eccentric men in bed. We are not told much more about the victim. That good actor Mr. SAM

The wallowing of *Mrs. Arbuthnot* in her shame would be ludicrous to-day; her abasement in the last act has been neatly tidied up, fresh incidents have been skilfully introduced, and *Lord Illingworth* is given new ammunition of the right gauge, as well as a sharper edge to some of his epigrams. A wit has been at work, and we should like to know his name.



(*The Shrike*)

Jim Downs—MR. SAM WANAMAKER

WANAMAKER cleverly steps up his fumbling frustration, but the design is so flatly episodic that he remains almost a case number. One is only vaguely sorry for him. The lunatics, and the doctors beside whom they appear sane, are all undeveloped figures in a psychiatric freize. There are dramatic moments in the third act, but the play is mechanical, with very little depth of character.

Mr. MICHAEL BENT-HALL's production of *A Woman of No Importance* is remarkable for three things, its style, its avoidance of burlesque, and the way in which a minor Wilde has been improved by a writer whose name should certainly have been stated. In this case revision is justified.

Lavishly charming sets and dresses by Mr. LOUDON SAINTHILL, a star cast and a hand-polished production have admittedly been expended on a secondary display of verbal fireworks, but I think it was worth doing. Miss ATHENE SEYLER's amiably bumbling *Lady Hunstanton* is perfect, Miss ISABEL JEANS' *Mrs. Allonby* the refinement of elegant malice. Miss JEAN CADELL, Miss NORA SWINBURNE and others fit naturally into the artificial pattern, and if Mr. CLIVE BROOK wasn't entirely at home as *Lord Illingworth* on the first night, he probably is by now.

Recommended

Ruth Draper, great soloist (Globe). *Dear Charles* (New), in which Yvonne Arnaud gives a lesson in high comedy, and *Dial "M" for Murder* (Westminster), a cunning thriller. ERIC KEOWN



(*A Woman of No Importance*)

Mrs. Allonby—MISS ISABEL JEANS

Lady Hunstanton—MISS ATHENE SEYLER



AT THE BALLET

Giselle (ROYAL OPERA HOUSE)

UNTIL lately balletic protocol ordained that every company contributing to the rising tide of enthusiasm for the dance should present its academic credentials with a performance of *Les Sylphides*—until, that is, it became slowly apparent to earnest balletomanes that new and different standards had been set. Dame NINETTE DE VALOIS's artistic and creative direction of the Sadler's Wells *corps de ballet* had ended it with a technical proficiency which in Diaghilev's days was looked for only in solo dancers.

Interest was concentrated again, as it had been a hundred years ago, on the ballerina and her noble partner. To-day *Giselle* is the test-piece for the aspirant to highest classical honours, and at the moment only two of our dancers, Miss Margot Fonteyn and Miss Alicia Markova, hold, as it were, a double First.

The story of the peasant girl whose love for the disguised prince turns to madness when she discovers his duplicity, her tragic death and her rising from the grave to join other brides who have perished on the eve of marriage, calls for rare powers of poetic and musical interpretation. *Giselle*, danced to ADOLPHE ADAM's unpretentious music, was TCHAIKOVSKY's favourite ballet: "this pearl of poesy, music

and choreography," he called it, and it is still in highest favour.

While Miss Fonteyn is recovering from the effects of her recent illness Miss VIOLETTA ELVIN and Miss MOIRA SHEARER have offered themselves at the Royal Opera House for examination in the part. To the former I award $\beta+$ and to the latter $\alpha-$. Miss ELVIN, an elegant and highly accomplished ballerina, was magnificently partnered by Mr. MICHAEL SOMES. Her every movement is lovely in itself and her relative failure is largely a matter of personality. She fails to convey the child-like innocence of *Giselle*: she is a confident débutante and not the simple village maiden. In the second act theoretically disembodied personality is of less account and pure dancing is equal partner with impersonation.

Miss MOIRA SHEARER's ethereal beauty, her delicately poised lightness and elevation instantly win our hearts, and she has, as well, the indefinable authority of the *prima ballerina* as she enters the scene. In the mad passages her features are

suffused with a poignancy which in a curious way is little helped by her natural beauty. It is impossible not to be continuously conscious of her wealth of Titian hair and to wonder whether a final touch of artistry would not have been to conceal it in the raven tresses of tradition. After all, she wore a grey wig in *Ballet Imperial*. In the second act the tragedy of the penitent lover and momentary reunion with her love eluded both Miss SHEARER and Mr. ALEXIS RASSINE. But then the lighting of the cemetery is so capricious that anything might be happening. Even so, Miss MARY DRAGE's regal lyricism as *Myrtha*, Queen of the Wilis, is enchanting.

On both occasions Mr. BRIAN SHAW, first with Miss NADIA NERINA and then with Miss ANNE HEATON, contributed an exciting triumph of virtuosity to the interpolated *pas de deux* of the first act. In the mimed part of *Hilarion*, Mr. LESLIE EDWARDS took high honours. Mr. FRANKLIN WHITE, in the same part, I rate *proxime accessit*.

C. B. MORTLOCK

LIBERATION

SAUSAGES are essentially inscrutable and secretive,

As unrevealing as anything that exists,
Congenitally linked, tied with a common tie,

As indistinguishable as peas or Wykehamists;
Following each other out of a common matrix

With smooth precision, mechanically procured,
Mass-produced in organic assembly-lines

Long before Henry Ford.

But the soul, the secret, the essence, the heart of the matter,

Lies in the elements the maker mixes in;

Despite their deceptive and superficial resemblance,

Sausages are far from sisters under the skin.

For fourteen years we have had some key to the mystery

Safe in the assurance that by beef sausages was meant

A proportion of meat and milk and edible offals

As high as fifty per cent.

But now the hand that held a corner of the curtain

Has let it fall. We are back where we began,

Forced to experiment and choose and come to a decision

To learn by sickening ourselves, like primitive man.

Symbols are cheap. Freedom has many faces.

The men with mass-production bred in the bone

Stare through the glass; and the sausages stare back at them:

And the souls of both are their own.

P. M. H.

at the PICTURES

Appointment in London—The Little World of Don Camillo

UNDENIABLY *Appointment in London* (Director: PHILIP LEACOCK) could be described as the old stuff; the fact that it is about Bomber Command whereas most of the conventions have been established in stories about Fighter Command is strictly irrelevant, a matter of detail. This is certainly another variation on a war-story theme in essentials familiar—one might even trace it back to the other war, and *Journey's End*. But this example is as gripping as ever, and remarkably well done. The principal character is one of those young nerve-racked commanders nearing the end of their tether, the story's suspense coming partly from uncertainty whether he will reach the end of his before it breaks. He has flown eighty-seven operations and is determined to complete ninety though urged to rest by all within reach; the action covers the single month (August 1943) in which he attains the round figure, the last flight being done against orders to provide the climax. It is a fine spectacular climax, built up of authentic shots taken on night raids; the behind-the-lines dramatics even of the main story can't stand up to it, let alone the interpolated scenes of German officers barking orders when the raid is at its height. These last seem to me a quite false note, impossible to justify on any grounds whatever; if the dramatic point is the simple fact that there was an attack, do we have to be elaborately shown that the defenders got worked

up about it? Nevertheless the main narrative, the scenes at the bomber station and in the local pub (though basically the same as those we have seen in stories about fighters), and the familiar characters that are basically the same as those we have seen even in first-war Army stories (the young pilot here called "The Brat" is, of course, the well-known 1914-1918 subaltern called "The Babe")—all this, though conventional, is freshened by skilful handling. DIRK BOGARDE as the overwrought hero makes the most of a welcome change from his recent succession of on-the-run-in-a-raincoat parts, and many others in the long cast do well.

Nothing for it, I suppose, but to write about *The Little World of Don Camillo* (Director: JULIEN DUVIVIER); of the other films this week, it is the one that will please most people and rouse most attention. The trouble is that being temperamentally out of sympathy with this kind of story myself, I am strongly inclined merely to argue with the innumerable people I know will rejoice in it. This is unfair to the film and gives nobody any satisfaction (except perhaps me). It deals, as many thousands know who have read GIOVANNI GUARESCHI's best-selling novel, with a sort of Flagg-and-Quirt feud between the parish priest of an Italian village and the new Communist mayor, and there is indisputably a great deal of good simple fun in it; what I object

to is the atmosphere of conscious charm and infinite kindly understanding of human foibles, rubbed in—scrubbed in—here by an unctuous, complacent and roguishly wise American commentary, but also an essential ingredient in the story itself. It is a Franco-Italian film of which there are two versions; the French one was press-shown, but



[Appointment in London]
Wing-Commander Tim Mason—
DIRK BOGARDE

apparently in both the voices were adjusted afterwards. By force of personality FERNANDEL and GINO CERVI give comic strength to the pair of antagonists, and the life of the village is well conveyed in many an attractive shot. But for me the whole mood of a piece like this is invincibly, irritatingly condescending.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The outstanding one in London is still *The Secret Game* or *Les Jeux Interdits* (14/1/53), and the next most notable is also French: *Le Plaisir* (18/2/53).

Releases are undistinguished, but *The Long Memory* (4/2/53) is quite an entertaining example of the elaborated melodrama, and even *Women of Twilight* (28/1/53), a stagey "exploitation picture," has bright moments.

RICHARD MALLETT

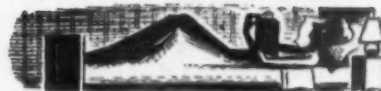


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Haworth and Hughenden

The Brontë Story. Margaret Lane. Heinemann, 21/-

Peacocks and Primroses: A Survey of Disraeli's Novels. Muriel Masfield. Geoffrey Bles, 21/-

WHAT with the twin problems of Mr. Brontë and Mr. Nicholls, both living, and with others even more awkward to a Victorian of her sensibility, Mrs. Gaskell was a brave woman to take on the "Life of Charlotte Brontë" only four months after her subject's death. She was sadly torn between her own honesty and her anxiety to diminish pain, and as a result the *Life*, though still a remarkable biography, suffers from both omission and distortion. To correct these is the aim of *The Brontë Story*, which draws on later material to bring Mrs. Gaskell into line with fact. Miss Margaret Lane makes no attempt to belittle her, indeed the reverse, for she is a Gaskell enthusiast. In her preface she points out modestly that her book is for the general reader rather than the Brontë specialist, who will know most of it already. The general reader will find in it the excitement of a literary detective hunt as well as a balanced account of the whole extraordinary Haworth drama, that was like a Greek tragedy with a Methodist chorus.

Mrs. Gaskell's first dilemma was, of course, Mr. Brontë's character. She found him hard and eccentric, and, believing such improbable stories as that he had sawn off the legs of his wife's bedroom chairs during her confinement, ended by being unfair. His strange children cannot have been a light burden to a dyspeptic widower, and Miss Lane reminds us of his eagerness to inform them and of his later delight in Charlotte's success. With the fever-stricken Clergy Daughters' School, run by an incompetent clergyman whose sideline was light reading for the young about hell, Mrs. Gaskell ran into further trouble. Charlotte declared the description in "Jane Eyre" was not exaggerated, but Mrs. Gaskell was obliged to tone down her comments in later editions. So far she had shown courage, but when she got to the vital episode of the Heggers, and to the desperate confession to the priest in Brussels, she shied, as she also did at Charlotte's ecstatic happiness in her brief marriage. (Poor Mr. Nicholls comes out of it all very well. One warns to him greatly for the plea of rheumatism with which he dodged the mission field.) But probably Mrs. Gaskell's most important reticence was about the lurid aspects of Charlotte's imagination, reflected in the exotic daydreams which Miss Lane suggests were as potent a drug to the young Brontës as Branwell's laudanum, and confirmed by the long series of wild romances churned out in secret—spidery manuscripts at which Mrs. Gaskell scarcely looked, but which others have since found significant. Notably good drawings by Miss Joan Hassall catch the Brontë atmosphere memorably. This book may make us smile at Mrs. Gaskell's extreme delicacy, but it leaves our

respect for her intact. The description of the death of Emily, her grim reserve torturing the two remaining sisters, is one of the most moving passages in English biography.

Another conducted tour is *Peacocks and Primroses: A Survey of Disraeli's Novels*, by Miss Muriel Masfield. She analyses at excessive length plots which are almost invariably preposterous, but her commentary on the background is interesting, and carefully selected quotations give a fair indication of Disraeli's astonishing variety. Politically the novels were bound to be a mine of information; the surprising thing about them is that the same man could write so well and so insufferably. His passionate heroes burning with ambition, his lofty-browed heroines, his Caliph's daughters and his ducal splendours lured him into patches of the deepest purple; and yet he could write simply and powerfully about the poor, he could hit off a character with brilliant economy, and so long as no young heart was aflame his dialogue could be crisp and witty. Remembering that Wilde was brought up on him, one reads with special attention such passages as "Nothing can do me good," said Alfred, throwing away his almost untasted peach; "I should be quite content if anything could do me harm."

ERIC KEOWN

The Victorian Sage. John Holloway. Macmillan, 18/-

While disclosing by what subtlety of words six of his favourite authors set about to influence their readers, the writer of these studies in argument is revelling in the interplay of metaphor and analogy, of truism and paradox, and of all the hundred and one varieties of the graceful art of begging the question. His main fairly obvious contention is that a sage's philosophy



"I'm afraid you'll find us very old-fashioned—
D.C., two-dimensional and all that."

must come through the whole tenor of his writing rather than from explicit statement. To impress some underlying conviction the fervour of Carlyle, the insinuating gentleness of Newman, the geologic pressures of George Eliot and even the flippancies of Disraeli are equally designed. For this Matthew Arnold struts and poses, Thomas Hardy storms and laments. Perhaps unavoidably there is an implication that they all at times ply their craft in a way to come near positive trickery. Nothing is said about talking the hind leg off a dog, but intentionally or not here is excellent instruction to that end.

C. C. P.

People and Americans. Stanley Wade Baron. *Rupert Hart-Davis*, 12/6

Although this book has all the ingredients of the pot-boiler (it is, I imagine, the kind of thing that a burgeoning novelist writes between novels, to keep his hand in and to use up accumulated trifles of plot and character), and is unhappy and unsatisfactory in structure and inconsistent in literary texture, it somehow manages to sustain the promise of Mr. Baron's recent novel "All My Enemies." In London, Paris and Venice we meet a strange assortment of Americans, penurious and lavish, staid and wild, cultured and unbelievably blockheaded; we listen to their chatter, most of it slick, shallow and "booksie-wooksie," and follow them through highly imaginative and recklessly dramatic incidents: and on the face of it there is nothing in this "Memoir of Transatlantic Tourists" to distinguish it from routine pulp-magazine pulp. But here and there, notably in the encounter with Vera and family in the

Commercial Road, there are patches of excellent writing and unusually sensitive observation; and the hope that "All My Enemies" was no flash in the pan is re-kindled. The title, by the way, seems to imply a gratuitous insult to somebody or other, but this is probably unintentional.

A. B. H.

Troy Chimneys. Margaret Kennedy. *Macmillan*, 11/6

It would be interesting to know if this is a deliberate denial of "The Constant Nymph"—a shrug of the shoulders to cast off the warmth and erratic romanticism of the author's second book. If so it succeeds. It is a critic's book—the brutal truth being that it needs a paid hand to wade through the first twenty pages, though after that it is fascinating going. The hero, Miles Lufton (1782-1818), has two personalities—the *arriviste* M.P. and the kindly, conscientious country gentleman of small means. The author is inclined to rub that fact in rather too often for even the slow-wits' benefit. Letters about him and his hushed-up death begin and end the book. The story, which has flavour and pathos, comes in the middle. He falls briefly in love with his idea of a little girl who escaped from the French Revolution by being pushed under the cloak of a friend by one of her family on the way to death. The idea resolves into most hateful fact. Indeed, the book is an accumulation of disappointment, and yet, read slowly (as it should be), it has a peculiar charm.

B. E. B.

SHORTER NOTES

Books in General. V. S. Pritchett. *Chatto and Windus*, 12/6. In these *New Statesman* articles one of the best living literary critics dances round various writers and books in a fine frenzy of ideas, observations and phrases. Mr. Pritchett's intellectual exuberance sometimes makes him more enlivening than enlightening, but how firmly he tracks down his subjects' strength and how serviceable his packed mind is to his sensibility!

London Calling North Pole. H. J. Giskes. *William Kimber*, 15/-. "Incredible" the blurb accurately calls this absorbing story by the Director of German military counter-espionage in Holland of how for nearly two years he kept Allied wireless communications with secret agents under German control. A few who will not tell can judge of Colonel Giskes' complete truthfulness. But his story is more exciting than many whodunits and at least bears the semblance of truth.

The Lost Woods. Edwin Way Teale. *Hale*, 21/-. In Everyman's childhood is a loved place he can never find again. Tracts of the woods he roamed in boyhood so haunt the memory of Mr. Teale. His search for "the lost woods" has led him to discoveries that will permanently enrich American natural history as they will haunt the memory of all imaginative readers who have the felicity to share them in this distinguished book.

Dynasty of Iron Founders: the Darbys and Coal-Brookdale. Arthur Raistrick. *Longmans*, 30/-. Well-written history, commissioned by a firm of ironmasters to commemorate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its founding by Abraham Darby, a Bristol Quaker. For one hundred and fifty years it was developed exclusively by members of the Darby family. Quaker plain-dealing, plain living and singleness of purpose, together with a remarkable succession of pioneering brains, made it honourably prominent during the critical years of the Industrial Revolution... Packed with detail invaluable to technologists and social historians.

Asphalt and Desire. Frederic Morton. *Secker and Warburg*, 12/6. Oh dear! Yet another distressing example of Hemingway's wretched influence on the American novel. "My mouth and teeth got mad, I shouted almost loud 'Who am I?' I shouted at the dim prim petunias below me, I shouted, 'Who filched my standard?'... There was no answer and I grew very dizzy." Enough?



"Don't trouble—I've done it myself."



"Now what happened?—tell us in your own words."

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MISSING LAUREATE

V - Triumph—and Despair

Thomas Hardy, coveting the Laureateship, has kidnapped Lord Tennyson and holds him prisoner in the Iron Hand School of Journalism, an evil organization built up by Hardy for the purpose of extracting literary work from established writers by means of physical violence. Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson, disguised as plumbers, are admitted to the School by Frank Gudgeon, a dissatisfied student, who has agreed to drug the Laureate's gaoler and to help in the work of rescue.

HOLMES was a master of make-up, and I could well understand Gudgeon's bewilderment when he was confronted, at the entrance to the Iron Hand School of Journalism, by a bow-legged, corduroy-clad artisan, chewing tobacco with wolfish voracity and ejecting the juice in all directions. A curt "The Laureate" was needed before our accomplice, his look of doubt changing to one of admiration, turned and led us upstairs into a long, dimly-lighted corridor. He paused before the second door on the left-hand side. "In there," he said.

Holmes handed me a heavy coil of rope which he carried over his shoulder. "We may not need this, Watson," he said, "but it is not impossible that the life of England's Poet Laureate will hang upon it." He raised his voice. "Lord Tennyson!" he cried.

"Never!" came the reply, in a deep, resolute voice. "The Laureateship is not for you, cajole or threaten as you may!"

"We are friends!" shouted Holmes. "Stand back, while we break our way in to your assistance! Do not fear reprisals against Lady Tennyson. She is safe in Scotland Yard, surrounded by two hundred and fifty picked men!"

The next moment we had all three hurled ourselves bodily against the door. It burst from its hinges, and we fell on top of it into the room, at the very feet of a tall, bearded man who stared at us with an air of stupefaction. For a moment not a word was spoken, and then, into the silence that seemed all the more complete after the clatter and uproar of our entry, there fell a sound which even now causes the hair to stand erect upon my head as I recall it. It was the creak and thud as the main door by which we had entered was opened and shut, and the pad of stealthy footsteps on the ground floor.

"It is Hardy!" quavered Gudgeon distractedly. "We shall all be torn limb from limb!"

"No time for words, Lord Tennyson!" cried Holmes, scrambling to his feet and snatching up his coil of rope. In an instant one end was knotted round the Laureate's waist and the other secured to a heavy metal gun-rack, while the poet, like some huge, bearded cat, bounded lithely on to the window-sill. As Gudgeon, trembling in every limb, followed the Laureate down the rope, I took up my stand in the corridor and braced myself to face whatever the future might bring. I heard Holmes's curt "Quick, Watson!" as he in turn lowered himself to the street . . . and then—it came! I have a nightmare recollection of a hoarse scream of rage, of an active, wiry figure in Scotch bonnet, Norfolk jacket and sombre cycling knickerbockers, brandishing what appeared to be an iron bar as he leapt towards me like a tiger; of my frantic rush to the window, and of the rope hissing through my scorching fingers. Then, a malevolent chuckle from above, a gleam of steel, and I was falling like a stone into the void.

I owed my life to Holmes that night. He was standing on the pavement, staring up into the night, his austere, clear-cut features pale and drawn, when I crashed upon him from a height of some twenty feet, bringing him heavily to the ground. He was up again in an instant, and hustling me into a four-wheeler which was waiting at the kerb.

Not a word was spoken for a full five minutes. Then the Laureate impulsively seized Holmes's hand and shook it fervently. "Most nobly you have played your part!" he said. "I fear I do not know your name, or how you found me. Just the same, I thank you, sir, with all my heart!"

"As to my name, sir," returned Holmes, "I prefer to remain anonymous, and I am quite willing that any credit in the case should go to Inspector Lestrade, who is dragging the Serpentine at this very moment, if I mistake not, for your Lordship's body. I fear, however, that my task is but half finished. Lestrade's courage is beyond question, but more than that I cannot say. His thrusts are wild, his parries tardy—"

"He cannot hope to cope with Hardy?" suggested the Laureate.

"I fear not. Hardy's blade is fully as quick and supple as my own, as I learned in our first encounter,

before it was ended by the Pope's call for aid." His eyes grew dreamy. "It would surely be unthinkable that Fate should rob me of my prey once more! And yet, I have a strange presentiment—"

As the world now knows, that presentiment was but too well justified. When we reached our Baker Street rooms my friend was handed a cablegram received during our absence. Holmes ripped it open, glanced over it, and flung it upon the table with a bitter imprecation. "I feared it, Watson, I feared it!" he groaned. "The Vatican!"

My heart was sore for my friend as I read the brief message. "All my socks have holes," it ran. "They must not be worn day after day. The pairs of stockings you picked are very small. Let me have one topcoat by May 13."

"Really, Holmes," I cried hotly, "this is outrageous! Does his Holiness take you for some kind of general dealer?"

"My good Watson," he replied wearily, "you cannot seriously imagine that the Pope would wish to trumpet his message to the world? The extraction of every eighth letter will disclose the true meaning readily enough. I must leave London, Watson, at the very moment when my blade is at Hardy's throat!" He stamped his foot and threw his hands in the air in his vexation. "Who knows with what cunning safeguards he will have surrounded himself by the time I have completed my task at the Vatican?"

A moment later he was his cold and austere self once more.

"Order a hansom, Watson," he said, "while I collect a toothbrush and my pocket Goethe. For to-day, let this monster go free. I shall return."

T. S. WATT

§ §

Home Notes

"Mr. Anthony Quayle, a director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, is due to sail for the Antipodes next Saturday (December 20), with a Stratford company of thirty-three, to play *Othello* in New Zealand and Australia on a 37-weeks tour . . . Those strangling hands, a-quiver in the photograph, will certainly get plenty of practice. Mr. Quayle will be accompanied on his travels by his wife, Dorothy Hyson, and their two young daughters."—*The Sketch*



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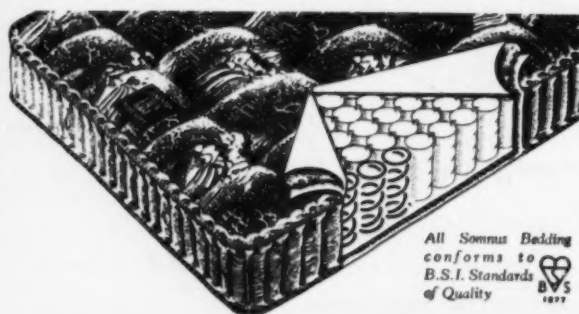
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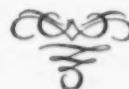


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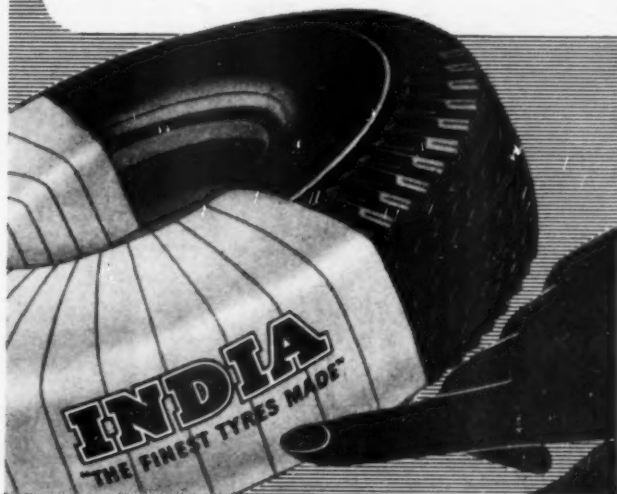
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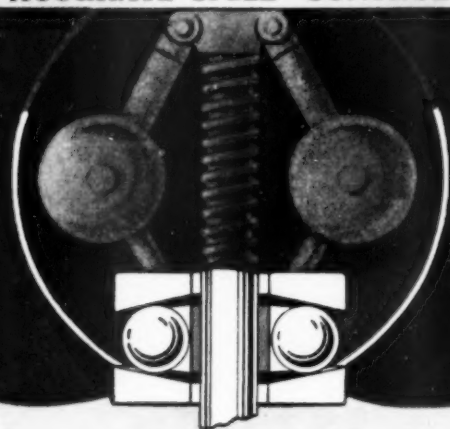
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